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**FLEXIBLE VARIABLE ENDOSCOPE**

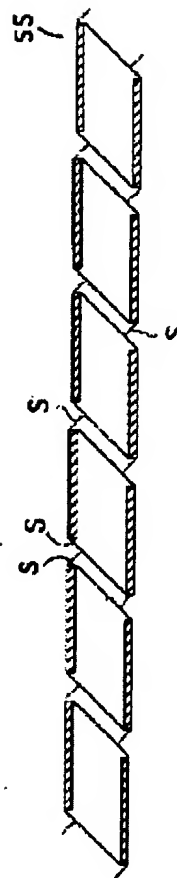
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**Abstract of JP2003019109**

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To provide a flexible variable endoscope superior in operability, capable of surely changing flexibility, and superior in durability.

**SOLUTION:** This endoscope has a flexible tube part having flexibility in an insertion tube, and changes the flexibility of the flexible tube part by a change in flexural rigidity of a flexural rigidity variable body arranged in the flexible tube part. The flexural rigidity variable body is formed as a spiral tube by spirally winding a belt-like material having a flat rectangular cross section so that a side surface part of the belt-like material separates in a free state. The base end part side of the flexible tube part is provided with a rotary member relatively rotatable to the flexible tube part, and regulating a shaft directional movement, and a torsional operation mechanism for rotatably operating this rotary member. A distal end of the spiral tube is fixed to the flexible tube part, and a rear end part is fixed to the rotary member. The side surface part of the belt-like material is moved so as to be capable of contacting and separating by contracting or expanding a diameter by applying circumferential directional torsion to the spiral tube by the torsional operation mechanism.



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